

Council

Monday, 23 July 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Alan Mason (Mayor), Councillor Wanda King (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Joe Baker, Roger Bennett, Rebecca Blake, Michael Braley, Juliet Brunner, David Bush, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Adam Griffin, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Gay Hopkins, Phil Mould, Brenda Quinney, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, Luke Stephens, Debbie Taylor, Derek Taylor and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

Reverend Paul Lawlor, Mayor's Celebrant.

Officers:

K Dicks, C Felton, S Hanley, S Jones and T Kristunas

Committee Services Officer:

R Cole

32. WELCOME

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

33. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Andrew Brazier, Michael Chalk, Simon Chalk and Roger Hill.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

35. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

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Chair

the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11th June 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

36. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Mayor

The Mayor's communications and announcements were as follows:

i) Former Mayor of the Borough, Ron Passingham

The Mayor referred to the tributes paid at the last meeting of the Council to the former Mayor of the Borough, Ron Passingham who sadly had died two days before that meeting.

The Mayor then welcomed to the meeting the daughters of former Councillor Passingham who each paid their own tribute to the work and achievements of their father and thanked Members for their kind words.

ii) Mayoral Functions

The Mayor advised that since the previous meeting of the Council he had attended a number of engagements, including the opening of a new Arts and Crafts Centre at The Old Needle Works, the Homecoming/Freedom Parade for the Mercian Regiment, an inaugural event in respect of the Kerala Cultural Association and the visit of Her Majesty the Queen to Worcester.

iii) Forthcoming Engagements

The Mayor advised that forthcoming engagements included the Scarecrow Day event and the Morton Stanley Festival.

iv) Urgent Business

The Mayor advised that he had accepted late circulation of an item relating to a Private Members Bill on "Disabled Persons" Parking Badges.

b) Chief Executive

The Chief Executive had no announcements.

c) Leader

The Leader's announcements were as follows:

i) Queen's Visit to Worcester

The Leader advised the Council that he had attended an event at the Guild Hall to celebrate the visit of Her Majesty the Queen to Worcester.

ii) Armed Services

The Leader advised that he had signed the Armed Forces Concordat and had laid a wreath at the War Memorial as part of Armed Services Day.

iii) Redditch in Bloom

The Leader thanked officers for their hard work in relation to the Redditch in Bloom campaign.

iv) Children's Centres

The Leader referred to two recent Ofstead Inspections which had taken place at Woodland's Children's Centre in Woodrow and Cherry Trees Children's Centre in Batchley. In both instances the Children's Centres were graded as Outstanding and in addition had received a grading of Outstanding in all 20 areas of the inspections which was an extremely rare achievement.

The Leader also made reference to the fact that three of the four Children's Centres within the Borough were graded as Outstanding with the fourth being graded as Good. No other District in the County had an Outstanding grading.

The Leader welcomed Judith Willis, Acting Head of Community Services together with some of the members of staff from both Woodlands and Cherry Trees Children's Centres to the meeting. The Leader and Councillor Gandy both paid tribute to the work undertaken at the Centres and congratulated the staff on their achievements.

The Mayor added his congratulations and stated he intended to visit the Centres in the near future.

37. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

No questions had been received.

38. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

A Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor Bill Hartnett in respect of the Worcestershire Joint Services Review. This was seconded by Councillor Carole Gandy.

In proposing this cross party motion, Councillor Hartnett in particular referred to the Accident and Emergency and Maternity services

under threat at the Alexandra Hospital. Councillor Hartnett paid tribute to the work of the "Save the Alex" Campaign which had resulted in over 37,000 people signing a petition opposing the reduction in services. Reference was made to the increasing population of the Borough and to the age profile of the population. It was reported that Bromsgrove District Council had approved a similar Notice of Motion and there was to be a debate by Stratford on Avon District Council shortly. Councillor Gandy seconded the Motion and referred to previous campaigns to protect services at the Hospital. Councillor Gandy made reference to the difficulties of accessing alternative hospitals and stressed the importance of residents writing to the Trusts and to their MPs to give their views.

The Notice of Motion was the subject of the following named vote in accordance with Procedure Rule 17.7:

Members voting FOR the motion:

Councillors Joe Baker, Roger Bennett, Rebecca Blake, Michael Braley, Juliet Brunner, David Bush, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Adam Griffin, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Gay Hopkins, Wanda King, Alan Mason, Phil Mould, Brenda Quinney, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, Luke Stephens, Debbie Taylor, Derek Taylor and Pat Witherspoon.

Members voting AGAINST the motion:

None.

Members ABSTAINING from voting:

None.

It was consequently

RESOLVED that

the Motion be agreed in the following terms:

"This Council fully supports the community-led "Save the Alex" Campaign which is totally opposed to the closure of Accident & Emergency and Maternity services at the Alexandra Hospital.

It has been confirmed by Professor Rod Griffiths, the Independent Chair of The Joint Services Review Stakeholder Reference Board, at a public meeting on 21st June that the reason for the potential loss of services at the Alexandra Hospital is because going forward "we have a lot less money"

Encouraged by Professor Rod Griffiths' statements, Council agrees to write to the Health Minister, Andrew Lansley MP,

requesting that the shortfall of funding for Worcestershire NHS, said to be £200 Million over 4 years or approximately £1 Million per week (of which the acute hospitals share is £50 Million), is funded by Government, thus safeguarding all services in the County.

Also requesting the Minister receives a delegation of leaders from Redditch Borough Council, Bromsgrove District Council, Stratford-on Avon District Council and the "Save The Alex" campaign so that we can make our case.

Further, the Chief Executive, the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition are tasked to:-

- (1) vigorously represent the Council's position to Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust (WAHT), Worcestershire Health Care Trust (WHCT) and Worcestershire NHS;
- (2) pursue with all Worcestershire and Neighbouring NHS Trusts all alternative organisational strategies which will safeguard services in Redditch; and
- (3) join with any campaigns which advance and promote the Council's position."

39. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members received the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 26th June 2012.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 26th June 2012 be received and all recommendations adopted ; subject to:

in respect of minute 19 (Financial Reserves Statement – 2011/12)

it being noted that the sum donated to the Forge Mill Museum would be earmarked for specific purposes at the Museum and not returned to balances; and

in respect of Minute 19 (Financial Reserves Statement - 2011/12)

it being noted that further information would be made available by officers in relation to the funding of the Local Plan Inquiry.

40. REGULATORY COMMITTEES

The Council received the minutes of recent meetings of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 28th June 2012 be received and all recommendations adopted;**
- 2) **the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 20th June 2012 be received and adopted.**

41. STANDARDS COMMITTEE - LOCALISM ACT 2011

Members received the report of the Monitoring Officer on the Code of Conduct for Members and on the arrangements for handling complaints against Members, including the appointment of two Independent Persons as required under the Localism Act 2011.

The Monitoring Officer reported that following recent interviews only one person, Ms Megan Harrison had been recommended by the selection panel to be appointed as an Independent Person under the Localism Act 2011. The Monitoring Officer suggested that in order to avoid minimise costs and in view of the low number of complaints at Redditch, that Bromsgrove District Council be approached to ascertain whether it would be possible if necessary to make use of the services of that Authority's Independent Person (when appointed) if a substitute Independent Person was required.

The Monitoring Officer also reported that as Bromsgrove District Council had been unsuccessful to date in recruiting an Independent Person, a request had been received from that Authority to use the services of Ms Harrison if it proved to be necessary in the interim.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the Code of Conduct attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved;**
- 2) **the Arrangements for Managing Standards complaints attached at Appendix 2 to the report be approved;**
- 3) **the candidate recommended by the selection panel (Ms. Megan Harrison) be appointed as an Independent Person under the Localism Act 2011 and that the proposal to make use of the services of the Independent person eventually appointed by Bromsgrove District Council, under the circumstances referred to above, be approved. In addition, the proposal that if requested by Bromsgrove District Council Ms Harrison may act as that Council's Independent Person until their recruitment process is successful be approved;**

- 4) authority be delegated to the Standards Committee and Monitoring Officer to administer the Standards procedure and processes relating to the Code of Conduct and Arrangements for managing standards complaints as adopted by the Council;
- 5) authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make any additional consequential amendments to the Constitution required to implement the arrangements and processes and the decision regarding gifts and hospitality at 6) below; and
- 6) gifts and hospitality over the value of £25 be registered by Members on a publically available register recognising the duty to act with openness, honesty and integrity and in order to comply with the requirements of the Council's Anti-Bribery Policy.

42. **JOINT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING STRATEGY - CONSULTATION**

The Council considered a consultation document from the Worcestershire Health and Well-being Board on the Worcestershire Health and Well-being Strategy.

Members noted the five priorities within the Strategy but had concerns regarding transport and access to services and to the funding for the contents of the Strategy, particularly in view of proposed County Council budget cuts. Clearly there was also an overlap between this consultation and the on-going review of Acute Hospital Services discussed earlier in the meeting.

Members were also concerned about the short period of time for responding to the consultation.

RESOLVED that

the Chief Executive be requested to co-ordinate a response to the Worcestershire Health and Well-being Board through the Group Leaders and the Portfolio Holder Councillor Debbie Taylor.

43. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME 2014 - EMPLOYER CONSULTATION ON REVISIONS TO SCHEME**

The Council considered a consultation document from the Local Government Association in relation to proposed revisions to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

RESOLVED that

the Council supports the proposals relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme as contained in the Local Government Association consultation document.

44. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

The Council considered an Urgent Business decision which had been approved in accordance with the Council's urgency procedures, namely:

Appointment to outside body – Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

The decision involved the confirmation of the appointment of Councillor Roger Hollingworth as the joint representative for Bromsgrove District Council, Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council on the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP.

It was also reported at the meeting that a Member was required to act as substitute for Councillor Hollingworth.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the decision be noted; and**
- 2) Councillor Bill Hartnett be appointed as substitute to Councillor Hollingworth on the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP.**

45. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL

There were no separate items of Urgent Business for consideration at this meeting, other than the consideration of the Disabled Persons' Parking Badges Bill from Simon Kirby MP referred to below.

46. URGENT BUSINESS - DISABLED PERSONS' PARKING BADGES PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILL

The Council considered information received from Simon Kirby MP relating to his Disabled Persons' Parking Badges Bill.

Members expressed support for the purposes of the Bill.

RESOLVED that

a letter be sent to the Local MP expressing support for the Disabled Persons' Parking Badges Bill.

Council

Monday, 23 July 2012

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.52 pm